

Chapter Six

"WHAT ARE YOU AFTER?": A HISTORY OF LESBIANS, GAY MEN, BISEXUALS, AND TRANSGENDER PEOPLE AT THE TWIN CITIES CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA 1969-1993*

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Introduction and Overview

A 1970s pamphlet published by FREE, the first gay rights organization in the Upper Midwest, asked its readers, "What are you after?" The question was meant to suggest that there was something more for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people than the oppression, the fear, and the pain of the closet. One could find what one was after by "coming out," by joining a community. The history of the lesbian, bi, transgender, and gay community at the University of Minnesota from 1969 to the present is a story of radical transition. It was University activists who, through courageous effort, developed the first self-conscious, politically active gay movement in the region. Sexual minority communities had existed in Minnesota before that time. But now for the first time activists challenged the silence which stifled the gay, lesbian, bi, and transgender community, developed support networks for each other, and sought to persuade the "straight" majority that it was in the interest of all to accept and celebrate sexual diversity rather than to punish it.

The history of transgender people, bisexuals, lesbians, and gay men at the University of Minnesota since the late 1960s can be divided into three stages: 1) a period of student activism (1969-1974), 2) a period of quiescence and consolidation (1975-1988), and 3) a period of joint faculty and student activism and community building (1987-present). During the first period, there was only one organization to represent the needs and interests of gay, bi, transgender, and lesbian people: FREE. During the second period, gay, lesbian, and bi faculty networks began to develop, a faculty initiative resulted in the revision of the Equal Opportunity Policy to include sexual orientation, and some faculty began to incorporate issues of sexual diversity into the curriculum. Toward the end of the second period, the student community fragmented into several different interest groups: men, women, bisexuals, people of color, graduate students, and undergrads. The last period has seen an impulse toward unified community while accommodating diversity. It has also seen a growing productive relationship between "out-of-the-closet" faculty and students who look to them as role models. For the purposes of this history, it is also important to acknowledge the Select Committee's role in developing the lesbian, bi, transgender, and gay community. The Select Committee required enormous input

* My sources for this project have consisted of newspaper articles from the Minneapolis Star, the Minneapolis Tribune, the St. Paul Dispatch, and the Minnesota Daily; the constitution and fliers of FREE; records of the Student Organization and Development Center; articles by Lyn Miller ("The Dawn of Gay Liberation in Minnesota") and Robert Halfhill ("FREE: The First Gay Liberation Group in Minnesota") in the 1989 Official Pride Guide; and interviews with Eli Coleman, Patricia Mullen, Jacqueline Zita, Ray Myers, Gary Thomas, Jim Berg, Gary Schiff, Robert Jacobsen, Eva Shirts, Joe Duca, George Holdgrafer, Tim Blade, Elise Mattheson, and others whom I cannot acknowledge. I was also an actor and observer in many of the events described from 1988 to the present. Many of the documents describing the early activities of FREE were collected by the FBI, to which I had access thanks to the Freedom of Information Act. Toni McNaron has published a book, I Dwell in Possibility (1992), which discusses her life and work at the University of Minnesota as a lesbian faculty member.

Some people might argue with my attempt to include transgender people in this history (particularly in the section describing the Program in Human Sexuality), since gender identity is a different category from sexual orientation. I have included them because transgender people are and always have been a part of "gay" communities and subcultures, and because transgender people are often directly affected by discriminatory policies and attitudes directed against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

and cooperation from all sectors of the University of Minnesota. The recruitment of volunteers to staff committees has created a diverse network of people and unified us in working toward a common goal.

Early History: FREE

Fight Repression of Erotic Expression (FREE) was one of the first gay liberation organizations in the country, and the first to organize in the Upper Midwest. Student activists from the University of Minnesota created change, not only within the University, but in the Twin Cities and throughout the Midwest. Later community-based activism grew from the seed of University-based activism. So a history of gay, bi, lesbian, and transgender people at the University of Minnesota is also a history of the development and maturation of the transgender, bi, gay, and lesbian community in Minnesota as a whole.

Koreen Phelps and Steven Ihrig organized FREE shortly after the Stonewall riots sent shockwaves through lesbian, bi, gay, and transgender communities throughout the world. FREE received official approval as a student organization from the Twin Cities Assembly on October 24, 1969.¹ FREE sponsored social events and acted as a support group from the beginning, but its founders considered it primarily a political activist and educational organization. While most gay, lesbian, and bi student groups on campus today grant membership in return for simple attendance at meetings, FREE required its voting members to contribute "six hours of non-public work or two hours of public work"--"public" meaning in settings where it would be necessary to come out of the closet to the University and perhaps the broader community.² As expressed in many of their fliers, FREE members believed that the most revolutionary aim of FREE was quite simply to "prove the existence of gay people." One of their first actions, in February of 1970, was to "integrate" a dance at the University by descending on it with about fifty members of FREE to dance in same-sex pairs. Stephen Ihrig told the Minneapolis Star, "One of our main functions as a group is to acclimatize the straight public to our existence--to our reality."³ Phelps and Ihrig led a Free University course on "The Homosexual Revolution" in 1969, organized the first gay rights protest on February 11, 1970, and initiated the Gay Pride March in Minnesota. They also helped start gay student groups at other universities like the University of Maryland. Koreen Phelps and Jack Baker, another early member of the group, appeared on television several times and spoke in churches, at schools, and on the radio to raise awareness of gay and lesbian issues. In May 1970, Jack Baker and Mike McConnell⁴ shocked the University community by applying for a marriage license. Jack Baker eventually became the first openly gay student body president in 1971, having run a colorful campaign where he appeared in one memorable poster wearing pumps.

FREE organized the first gay rights protest in Minnesota on February 11, 1970, when Thom Higgins, one of their officers, was fired from his job with the State Services for the Blind. Higgins, himself partially blind, worked on the Talking Book Radio Network. He was fired after he informed his supervisor that he would be appearing in a press conference on behalf of FREE. Higgins and FREE filed a complaint with the State Commission for Human Rights. The Human Rights Commission eventually dropped the case, claiming that they had no jurisdiction since sexual orientation was not mentioned in the state's anti-discrimination statutes. Higgins and FREE, with the aid of the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union, filed a lawsuit against the Human Rights Commission for failing to handle the case. But this instance of state-sponsored discrimination set a damaging precedent. A few months later, the University Regents voted to deny another FREE member, Mike McConnell, a job within the University Library system. As when Higgins was fired, FREE fought the discrimination through protests and a lawsuit. In the fall of 1970, the University denied FREE the right to organize a conference on campus, and FREE brought yet another lawsuit against the University.⁵

¹"Homosexuals' Group is Given Sanction at 'U,'" Minneapolis Tribune, Nov. 9, 1969.

²Constitution of FREE.

³"Homosexuals Intend to Integrate 'U' Dance," Minneapolis Star, Feb. 5, 1970.

⁴McConnell was known to most of his friends as "Mike," though his full name was James Michael McConnell. Newspaper accounts and official correspondence of the time refer to him as "James McConnell."

⁵"Homosexual's Bias Complaint to Be Investigated," Minneapolis Tribune, Feb. 5, 1970; "Rights unit won't probe homosexual bias charge," Minneapolis Star, Jan. 11, 1970; "In Court, on the dance floor, Group to fight for

The most concrete example of how FREE's campus-based activism spilled into the broader community was the foundation of "Gay House, Inc." FREE was supported in this project by members of the United Methodist Voluntary Service, Y.E.S., the Joint Urban Mission Project, and the People's Center. Gay House provided a non-exploitative environment for people to meet, socialize, and receive emotional support. It maintained a mailing list, provided educational materials, and remained open twenty-four hours a day so individuals could "drop in" whenever they needed to. Gay House was the first community service organization in Minnesota specifically for transgender, lesbian, gay, and bi people, and could be seen as a predecessor of today's Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council.⁶

Like its present-day successor, the Association of Gay/Lesbian/Bi Student Organizations and Their Friends, FREE represented a very diverse constituency and concerned itself with a wide range of justice issues. Its constitution stated that one purpose of FREE was to oppose "all discrimination on the basis of race, sex, creed, nationality, political persuasion, or sexual preference.... FREE is willing to support the efforts of any groups fighting against such discrimination if said group is in turn willing to defend the rights of gay people."⁷ There even appears to have been a transgender presence in the organization. One account of an early FREE meeting reports that an "elaborately dressed" individual complained of police harassment for coming to the meeting as a "drag queen."⁸ The diversity of FREE appears to have created tensions similar to those experienced by the Association today, since an account of FREE's first convention in October 1970 reports that "The polarization between moderate and radical gay people, lack of communication and 'racism,' 'sexism,' and 'chauvinism' within gay groups were major problems discussed."⁹ FREE's constitution, for all the anti-sexist rhetoric in its preamble, still referred to job holders as "Job Men." Women of the 1970 convention found it necessary to ask for a resolution guaranteeing equal representation of women and people of color. "The Women of FREE" formed their own caucus in order to make sure that the needs of lesbians would be addressed. Tensions between men and women eventually led the University Lesbians to form their own group and affiliate with the University Young Women in 1982.

Until about 1974, Jack Baker and FREE--in 1972 it was rechristened "Minnesota Gay Activists"--continued to be militant and visible in the University community. But as time went on, the initial enthusiasm began to decline. The dynamic pioneers of FREE moved on, and the Minnesota Daily records little gay or lesbian political action on campus between 1974 and 1986. In 1975, a proposal to institute a gay studies program at the University was rejected. In February 1978, University students organized to oppose Anita Bryant's campaign against the St. Paul ordinance banning discrimination against gays and lesbians, but the ordinance fell anyway. After a couple of name changes, the group was dubbed "The University Lesbian Gay Community" in 1977. The organization existed primarily as a social organization and support group, and the number of participants dwindled. In 1982, the organization split in two, succeeded by the University Gay Community and the University Lesbians, which affiliated with the University Young Women. Elise Mattheson recalls the emergence in the mid- to late-1970s of a bisexual organization on campus, though it appears to have been short-lived.

Recent Activism and Community Building

In the mid-1980s, bi, transgender, lesbian, and gay student activism and visibility began to increase, and a number of new student organizations came into being. Student activists organized a midwestern conference for bi, lesbian, and gay students in Coffman Union. Student organizations proliferated, partly reflecting the diversity of the gay, transgender, lesbian, and bi communities, and demonstrating that the needs of these different constituencies were not all met

FREEdom," Minnesota Daily, Feb. 10, 1970; "FREE officer fired from job with state-owned radio station; group may take legal action," Minnesota Daily, Feb. 5, 1970; "Pickets protest firing of FREE officer," Minnesota Daily, Feb. 11, 1970; "Human rights commissioner backs homosexual movement," Minnesota Daily, Feb. 27, 1970; "Disorganization marks gay lib convention," Minnesota Daily, Oct. 13, 1970.

⁶FREE flier on "Gay House, Inc."

⁷Constitution of FREE.

⁸"Human rights commissioner backs homosexual movement," Minnesota Daily, Feb. 27, 1970.

⁹"Disorganization marks gay lib convention," Minnesota Daily, Oct. 13, 1970.

by the University Gay Community and the University Lesbians. Around 1985, Elise Mattheson and three other women formed Bi Wimmin Welcome. In 1987, gay men at the University of Minnesota organized the fourth chapter nationwide of Delta Lambda Phi, "a social fraternity by gay men for all men." Around this same period, bi, gay, and lesbian law students formed a caucus. Early in 1989, Jim Berg, a graduate student in English, approached Professor Jacquelyn Zita with the object of forming a group to discuss research and work in the area of lesbian and gay studies. The result was the formation of the University Gay and Lesbian Network and a short-lived newsletter called the "Minnesota Queerie." Even as these new groups were forming, UGC experienced a dramatic influx of members, and UGC president Dave McPartlin began to play a more visible role in the campus community. Another student activist, Robert Jacobsen, successfully ran for Student Senate and eloquently raised awareness of gay and lesbian issues at the University.

Nineteen-ninety was a critical year for lesbian, transgender, gay, and bi activism at the University. Student activists began to draw attention to the discrepancy between the University's anti-discrimination policy (revised in 1986 to include sexual orientation), and the fact that the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) was expelling bi, lesbian, transgender, and gay students and forcing them to pay back money they had received from the program. Transgender, gay, bi, and lesbian students organized protests on campus against the ROTC, but were also visibly present in later campus protests against the formation of the "White Student Union" and the Persian Gulf War. Like FREE, they sought ways to "prove the existence of gay people" by organizing "pink picnics" on Northrop Mall and Valentine's dances in Coffman Union. Suzanne Denevan became the first openly lesbian student body president, and ran on a platform which challenged the ROTC's discriminatory policy. UGC acquired a small office space and a telephone, which were shared with the University Lesbians.

John Wrathall and Deb Quist became co-chairs of the Network, and radically transformed its mission. They called a University-wide meeting of students interested in agitating for a committee on lesbian, gay, and bisexual concerns and pushing for expansion of University curriculums to better reflect the experience of gay, transgender, bi, and lesbian people. The Network formed a committee, led by Lisa Jones and Dave Ward, to lobby the University to provide benefits for domestic partners (an agenda which lesbian faculty member Toni McNaron was also pursuing). It also formed a committee, led by John Wrathall, to survey existing course offerings; to compile a list of courses which included material on lesbian, transgender, bi, and gay experience; and to identify courses where it should be covered but was not. The Network applied for and received a \$500 grant from the Philanthrofund, a gay philanthropic organization, to conduct a thorough curriculum survey. It simultaneously wrote to Nils Hasselmo in spring 1990, asking for a meeting to discuss the appointment of a committee for lesbian, gay, and bi concerns. Hasselmo met with the group early in the fall of 1990; the result of this lobbying was the appointment of the President's Select Committee for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns in the fall of 1990.

The Network also cooperated with UGC to help more new student groups get started: the University Bi Community; Gay, Lesbian, and Bi Students of Color; and Gay, Lesbian, and Bi International Students. For a brief period, the Network served as an umbrella organization, facilitating cooperation and communication among all of the different University gay, lesbian, and bisexual groups. But in the spring of 1991, students formed a new group to play this role, and the Network began to focus its energies on gay, lesbian, transgender, and bi studies. (In 1992, the Network reorganized as the University Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Graduate Students' Academic Association.)

The rambunctious career of the University Bi Community illustrates how student activists creatively negotiated the tensions inherent in affirming difference while seeking unified community. U Bi Community was initially formed under the title "Bisexual Concerns" as the result of an initiative of Dave McPartlin, President of UGC. The Network agreed to reserve rooms in Coffman Union for the group and later paid the fees necessary for it to register with SODC. Eva Shirts and Joe Duca both jokingly recalled, "The first thing we did at our first meeting was change the name of the group. We didn't feel like very 'concerned bisexuals.'" Members of U Bi Community organized discussion groups and lectures, self-defense courses, and educational forums on bi-phobia. They also made their presence felt by sponsoring University events like "National Condom Week." For a time, tensions between men and women in the group resulted in the creation of a UBC women's caucus called "Women Loving Women." The very existence of U Bi Community was indicative of friction between bisexuals and gays

and lesbians; Eva Shirts recalls, "It had never occurred to me that I might have a place in the gay community." Yet, members of U Bi Community have always provided crucial leadership in efforts to create a unified gay, lesbian, transgender, and bi community on campus, and played an instrumental role in the creation of the Association.

For some time, student leaders had envisioned receiving University funding and acquiring an office which could serve as a resource center and focal point for student activities. Early in 1991, representatives of UGC, UL, U Bi Community, Delta Lambda Phi, the Network, Gay, Lesbian, and Bi Students of Color, the International Students, the Law Students, the Medical Students, HUGS (Heterosexuals Unafraid of Gays), and the Lesbian and Gay Caucus of the PSO (Progressive Student Organization) met to discuss forming an association which would lobby for student services funding, an office, and perhaps a bi, lesbian, gay, and transgender cultural center. Eventually these students formed the Association of Gay/Lesbian/Bi Student Organizations and Their Friends. The Association received funding, and moved from the small office UGC had acquired in 1990 to a much larger space on the second floor of Coffman Union. It eventually hired a half-time staff person, and published a resource guide for transgender, lesbian, bi, and gay students. The resource guide was called the "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Student Resource Guide" and was distributed to all incoming freshmen during fall 1992 orientation of new students. The Association sent representatives to the Select Committee and worked closely with the University on the "Emergency Response Team," which was convened in fall of 1992 to deal with a series of homophobic attacks on campus.

Faculty and Curricular Change

The increasing presence of visible gay, lesbian, and bi faculty and the growing willingness of a few faculty to incorporate issues related to sexual diversity into the curriculum have been among the most significant developments of the last decade and a half. There have undoubtedly always been transgender, lesbian, bi, and gay faculty at the University of Minnesota. Many "came out" over the years to small circles of friends, and to select co-workers or department heads. As gay male and lesbian faculty gradually became aware of each other, informal groups and networks, like the "Lesbian Faculty and Staff Potluck" (started in the fall of 1991), or the Faculty and Staff Forum, developed for the purpose of support. Many of these faculty provided support for bi, gay, transgender, and lesbian students or co-workers. But closeted or semi-closeted faculty were often less able to provide intellectual guidance to students wishing to pursue transgender, gay, lesbian, or bi studies than were their straight colleagues, because they were more fearful of having their sexual orientation exposed. Lesbian Professor Toni McNaron recalled the fear of "a question that will force me to lie quickly in order to avoid some devastating revelation that will cost me my job."¹⁰

Professor McNaron was the first lesbian faculty member to come out publicly, when in 1979 she informed the chair of the English Department that from that point on she would present syllabi and articles from "a lesbian-feminist perspective."¹¹ At least two gay male faculty had publicly come out quite a bit earlier. Gary Thomas, a Humanities professor, came out in 1971, during the heady days of FREE. Allan Spear, a professor in the History Department, made newspaper headlines when he came out in December 1974, becoming the first openly gay state senator in Minnesota. Jacquelyn Zita was out of the closet when she applied for a job in the Women's Studies Department in 1980. Until the late 1980s, Thomas, Spear, McNaron, and Zita were the only teaching faculty who were generally known by students to be lesbian or gay. Ray Myers in the Student Orientation Office was also publicly out of the closet. Other faculty like Lisa Albrecht (General College), Mary Jo Kane (Kinesiology and Leisure Studies), Anna Lee Stewart (School of Social Work), and Tim Blade (Design and Apparel) were also out in their departments and to their students. Early in 1990, Zita and Myers were instrumental in forming what became known as the "Faculty Forum," a group of gay, lesbian, and bisexual faculty, civil servants, and administrators. But this group also kept its distance from student organizations, since it wanted to have a group to support faculty needs and issues. Shortly after it formed, the Faculty Forum attempted to get a select committee for lesbian and gay concerns appointed by the University.

¹⁰Toni McNaron, *I Dwell in Possibility* (1992), p. 182.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 181.

Toni McNaron and a few other professors in Women's Studies were the first to deal openly with issues related to sexual difference in their curriculums in the early 1980s. McNaron taught the first lesbian studies course at the University, "Lesbian Cultures." Gary Thomas' topics courses on gay male culture and the social construction of homosexuality (taught in 1988 and 1989) were followed by the first regular gay studies course in the CLA bulletin, "Gay Men and Homophobia in the Modern West," a course which fulfilled two CLA distribution requirements ("historical perspective" and "cultural pluralism"). Jacquelyn Zita's "Heterosexism and Homophobia" (1990) and her "Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies" (1991), for which she organized a "Queer Studies" group with graduate and some advanced undergraduate students, represent continuing efforts to embody the burgeoning scholarship in the field in the University curriculum. In 1990-91 Thomas organized the "Gay and Lesbian Studies Research Project Colloquium Series" that featured lectures by eight scholars from the Twin Cities and Duluth campuses.¹² Both Zita and Thomas have scheduled graduate seminars in Queer Theory for the spring quarters of 1993 and 1994. In recent years, a number of graduate students who were doing dissertation research on lesbian, gay, transgender, or bisexual topics designed and taught their own courses, contributing to the growing academic discourse around issues of sexuality. In 1992-93 graduate students at the University of Minnesota organized the Third National Gay, Lesbian, and Bi Grad Students' Conference on Queer Studies.

Responses of the University Community

The University of Minnesota's official response to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students, faculty, and staff has varied over the years. Furthermore, some parts of the University community have been more hospitable to or tolerant of lesbian, bi, gay, and transgender people than others, depending on the political vagaries of particular departments or administrative structures at the University. For example, it is widely recognized that it has usually been easier for students, faculty, and staff to come out in departments in the Liberal Arts than in the Institute of Technology, the Carlson School of Management, or the Medical School. Also, the Regents have generally been more hesitant to affirm the rights and the equality of transgender, bisexual, lesbian, and gay people than have faculty and student forums.

In fall of 1969, when FREE sought official status as a student group, the Committee on Student Affairs of the Twin Cities Assembly granted it by a unanimous vote.¹³ Despite the show of support by this body of faculty and students, the Board of Regents expressed hostility and suspicion. The Regents had received complaints about the approval of the student organization, and asked the University administration to review the rules by which it approved student groups--implying that there was something wrong with the system if a group like FREE could receive approval.¹⁴ Perhaps one of those who had complained to the Regents was the Rev. Joseph B. Head, a retired Baptist minister who formed a group called "Citizens for the Preservation of the University of Minnesota (CPUM)." In June 1970, largely in response to the existence of FREE, the CPUM filed suit against the University for allowing the existence of FREE, claiming that the University was granting official sanction to "illegal activities" (presumably sodomy) and that FREE was using "the campus as a base to fan out into the high schools advocating their philosophy."¹⁵

That same month, FREE clashed dramatically with the Regents when they voted to deny Mike McConnell a job in the University Library system on the grounds that he was openly gay. The University Library system had offered McConnell a job as the Head of the Cataloging Division in the St. Paul Campus Library in April 1970. In May, McConnell and his partner, Jack Baker, filed for a marriage license. In June, the Regents instructed Dr. Ralph H. Hopp, the man who had hired McConnell, to inform him that the job offer had been withdrawn. Although the Regents gave no reasons, in statements in court and to the press, as to why McConnell was denied the job, representatives of the Regents openly stated that they did not feel a homosexual could appropriately serve the University as faculty. During the court hearings, University

¹²McNaron, Zita, Thomas, Lydia Hammesley, Marty Roth, John Mowitt (Twin Cities), and David Mayo and Larry Knopp (Duluth).

¹³"Homosexuals' Group is Given Sanction at 'U,'" Minneapolis Tribune, Nov. 9, 1969.

¹⁴David Kuhn, "Regents Query Acceptance of Homosexual Unit," Minneapolis Tribune, November 23, 1969.

¹⁵"'U' files answer to suit," Minneapolis Star, June 9, 1970.

attorneys and witnesses attempted to intimidate and humiliate McConnell by stating he was unfit for the job since his application for a marriage license indicated intent to commit the crime of sodomy. Regents also tried to discredit McConnell by telling the press that he didn't really want employment, just publicity. Furthermore, they claimed that his hiring would enrage the citizens of Minnesota. The Regents' brief for the hearing asserted that "no case has been found which holds that a refusal to hire or even a discharge because of homosexual activities constitutes a denial or deprivation of constitutional rights." "No court in the land will rule against us," Regent Daniel Gainey told the Minnesota Daily. In fact, U.S. District Judge Philip Neville did rule against them. As the Minnesota Daily reported the case, Neville ruled that "the University of Minnesota may not refuse to hire a person merely because he is an avowed homosexual.... [Employment] cannot be denied ...on arbitrary or discriminatory grounds."¹⁶

History of the Equal Opportunity Policy

While the Regents expressed overt contempt for transgender, lesbian, bisexual, and gay people, the University's Office of Equal Opportunity extended unofficial support. Patricia Mullen, current director of the Office, recalls that Lillian Williams, director in the early 1970s, told Jack Baker to get the word out that even though the Regents would not support an anti-discrimination policy on the basis of sexual orientation, she would still take complaints from the lesbian, bi, gay, and transgender community. The type of support which Williams gave was parallel to that offered by her state counterpart, Conrad Balfour, the State Human Rights Commissioner. Even though the Human Rights Department was forced to drop FREE activist Thom Higgins' discrimination complaint in 1970, Balfour made public statements supporting the rights of gay people, and appeared at meetings of FREE.

Given the Regents' reaction to the hiring of Mike McConnell, one would assume that adding sexual orientation to the University's equal opportunity statement would have been a major battle. In fact, it was accomplished in a rather unspectacular manner, on the initiative of a handful of individuals about a decade and a half after the dust had settled from McConnell's discrimination suit. In the mid-1980s, Toni McNaron, one of the few openly lesbian faculty members at the University at that time, wrote to University President Ken Keller to ask that the Equal Opportunity Policy be revised to include sexual orientation. Keller, who prided himself on being a civil libertarian, approached Pat Mullen, who at that time served as acting director of the Office of Equal Opportunity. Mullen, the University Attorney's Office, and the Office of Student Affairs researched the proposal, and Mullen eventually brought it to the Faculty and Student Affairs Committee. The Committee voted on and approved the proposal without comment or discussion. On May 9, 1986, the policy was approved by the Regents. By the time the Regents approved a University-wide anti-discrimination policy, University civil service rules and the policy of the University Hospital had for some time already been revised, banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. In approving the policy, the Regents merely affirmed for the entire University community what had already been the rule for many of its employees anyway.

The Program in Human Sexuality

The development of the Program in Human Sexuality (PHS) at the University of Minnesota Medical School also improved the environment for transgender, lesbian, bi, and gay people. PHS was founded about the same time as FREE, in 1970. It was created in response to needs expressed by physicians and health-care providers who felt ill-prepared to deal with a wide range of issues related to human sexuality, including homosexuality. The PHS also worked with community leaders and with theological seminaries to educate and conduct research on human sexuality. Faculty support for and interest in the Program resulted in the development in 1971 of

¹⁶"Homosexual marriage license denial urged," Minneapolis Star, May 23, 1970; FREE fliers: "Students To Save McConnell," "Schedule of Events for FREE's campaign to SAVE MCCONNELL," "SAVE MCCONNELL: Employment Discrimination Fact Sheet"; letter R. Joel Tierney to Ralph H. Hopp, June 24, 1970; "Homosexual sues to get job 'U' library offered, refused," Minneapolis Star, Aug. 3, 1970; "Regent calls McConnell unfit for U because of intent to commit sodomy," Minnesota Daily, August 7, 1970; "Hearing in McConnell suit set for tomorrow," Minnesota Daily, Aug. 4, 1970; "U attorneys: McConnell wanted views publicized, not employment," Minnesota Daily, Aug. 18, 1970; "Homosexual wins suit on 'U' job bias," Minneapolis Star, Sept. 9, 1970; "Judge stays injunction in U sex case," St. Paul Dispatch, Sept. 24, 1970; "Judge Stays Order to Hire Homosexual," Minneapolis Tribune, Sept. 25, 1970; "Librarians ask review in case of homosexual," Minneapolis Star, Oct. 17, 1970.

the curriculum for the Sexual Attitude Reassessment Seminars (SAR). PHS developed a new required Medical School curriculum in human sexuality, which was one of the first comprehensive curriculums in the country. Eli Coleman, current director of the PHS, studied sexual orientation when he did his dissertation in the PHS in the early 1970s. He has made important scholarly contributions to the study of homosexuality, and has been on the board of the Journal of Homosexuality since 1979.

The treatment of transsexuals at the University of Minnesota Hospital began in the Department of Psychiatry under Donald Hastings, and continued there until his death in 1977. At that time, the Department provided counseling and referral; urologists at the University Hospital also performed some gender reassignment surgery. After Hastings' death, key surgeons left the hospital and the program floundered for a year or two. In 1979, the PHS hired Sharon Satterfield as its new director. Satterfield had had background working with gender dysphoric patients and brought gender assessment counseling to the PHS. Since the early 1970s, in making such counseling and treatment available, the University has provided a vital service to transgender people in the Upper Midwest. In 1992, Eli Coleman became director of PHS. At that time, a number of transsexual patients followed Satterfield to the Family Practice Clinic, leaving the Program in Human Sexuality. Some controversy has ensued since, as PHS criticized Satterfield for continuing to see patients. Transsexual activists have criticized PHS and the University for trying to keep a monopoly on these services, for using patients for research without their permission and sometimes without their knowledge, and for making it difficult for them to transfer to other programs.

The Select Committee for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns

Symbolically, at least, the appointment of the Select Committee represented the University's most significant commitment yet to combat homophobia and heterosexism. In the fall of 1990, in response to lobbying by faculty and student groups, Nils Hasselmo requested of Professor Warren Ibele, chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee, that the campus climate for GLBT people be evaluated. A subcommittee of the University Senate's Social Concerns Committee was established with the name "Select Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns." It was significant that the committee had official University status, and a specific mandate to carry out a University-wide study and make recommendations; it was also significant that the committee drew heavily on openly gay, lesbian, and bi students, faculty, and staff for its membership. The first chair of the Select Committee was Professor John Beatty from the Department of Ecology. The Select Committee struggled through its first year under severe constraints. It was given an enormous task with no funding, expected to function on volunteer power alone. During the academic year 1991-92, Professor Jacquelyn Zita served as chair of the committee, and persuaded the University Senate to provide research assistance support. Eventually adequate funding was granted to create a half-time staff position. The Select Committee, with this limited support, conducted a faculty curriculum survey and gathered testimonials from a wide array of students, faculty, and staff. It also appointed subcommittees to study particular issues like the extension of spousal benefits to same-sex couples and the resources available for students pursuing gay, lesbian, bi, and transgender studies. In the spring of 1992, Dr. Marjorie Cowmeadow, Associate Dean of General College, was elected chair of the Select Committee.

In the fall of 1992, gay, lesbian, bi, and transgender students were subjected to vehement homophobic attacks and harassment which shocked the administration and many within the University community as a whole. The administration appointed an Emergency Response Team to investigate the incidents and to formulate a response in cooperation with the Association of Gay/Lesbian/Bi Student Organizations. Nils Hasselmo asked the Select Committee to cut short a vast, University-wide survey it intended to conduct, on the grounds that there was no need to "prove" the existence of homophobia. He asked instead that the Select Committee publish a report by March 1, 1993, with concrete recommendations that could be considered during the 1993-94 budget planning deliberations. The Select Committee was at first suspicious of this request, believing that it might be an attempt to avoid having to fund the surveys. They also feared that without empirical evidence to demonstrate the existence of homophobia, the implementation of their recommendations would be more easily opposed. But President Hasselmo did not want to spend money on surveys to find out that the University's climate was homophobic. Given recent events on campus, the president already knew that the climate was not safe or secure for GLBT people. The president requested that the Select Committee work with the recently convened Emergency Response Team for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and

Transgender Issues. On January 14, 1993, the Select Committee and the Emergency Response Team issued their Interim Report.

The focus of the Select Committee from January 21, 1991, through September 10, 1993, was on presenting the five essential recommendations to various constituent committees and the appropriate University Senate governance committees.

Critical meetings were held on May 4, 1993, when approval of both the Senate Consultative Committee and the Faculty and Staff Affairs Committee was needed to put the benefits resolution on the agenda for the University Senate meeting to be held on May 19, 1993. Fortunately, after some maneuvering, both committees unanimously approved the resolution. On May 19, 1993, the University Senate approved, by an 83-27 vote, the extension of benefits to gay and lesbian employees and their families.

In June 1993, central administration approved the establishment of a GLBT Program Office. The Board of Regents voted on September 10, 1993, to approve extending benefits to gay and lesbian employees and their families. The Select Committee completed its charge with the publication of its final report, Breaking the Silence, issued November 1, 1993.

Conclusion: Old Battles, New Battles

Recent discrimination controversies highlight the enormous change which has occurred since the 1970s, as well as the difficulty of eradicating entrenched institutional homophobia. The debate over the ROTC began in 1989, when student activists drew attention to the fact that in hosting ROTC, the University was violating its own anti-discrimination policy (since ROTC does not accept openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual students). This posed a dilemma, since many feared that the expulsion of ROTC would result in the loss of valuable Defense Department contracts. Nevertheless, in 1991, the University Senate passed a resolution, by a vote of 151 to 12, calling for the expulsion of ROTC if it did not begin to change its policy by 1993. In spite of the virtual unanimity of this faculty and student forum, the Regents voted to table the resolution. The Regents' decision was complex: some felt it was a national, not a local issue; some felt the University should await the outcome of the national election, since Presidential candidate Bill Clinton had promised to end the military's discrimination by executive order. None expressed the type of overt homophobia shown by Regents in the 1970s; but a good number of Regents were unsympathetic to the concerns raised by bi, lesbian, transgender, and gay students. The Regents' unwillingness to act on the Senate resolution highlighted the difficulty of bringing about social change when doing so requires confronting entrenched resistance and possible financial sacrifice. Many questioned whether the University took its anti-discrimination policy seriously, or whether it would comply only when doing so was convenient. In October 1992, seven student activists disrupted a Regents' meeting by handcuffing themselves to Regents' chairs to protest the tabling of the resolution.

Another critical battle was over domestic partner benefits. In 1990, when the City of Minneapolis was considering an ordinance to register domestic partners, some faculty, staff, and students began the discussion at the University of extending benefits to lesbian and gay men who were employees of the University and were in committed relationships. A presentation was made in January 1990 to the Faculty and Staff Affairs Committee of the University Senate.

Another discrimination case came up shortly after the ROTC debate began in earnest, raising similar concerns. Ray Myers, an openly gay man, lost his job in the Student Orientation Office after complaining to the Office of Equal Opportunity that he had been discriminated against in a promotion. His superiors claimed that they fired him because of job performance, although Myers presented considerable evidence to the contrary. The timing of his firing--literally within days of Myers' lodging a discrimination complaint--certainly raised suspicions. Nevertheless, in spite of a student petition and letters, and a long, drawn-out grievance process, Myers eventually found it easier to drop the case and simply seek employment elsewhere.

In the discrimination case of Mike McConnell, the Regents did not hesitate to say that they were denying him employment because of his homosexuality, so confident were they that such bigotry would be sanctioned by the courts and condoned by the public. Myers' superiors could not be so brazen. But McConnell had another advantage; he had not actually gone to work yet, and it was impossible for his employers to claim "poor job performance." Myers' situation was much more comparable to what most employees facing discrimination must deal with. It

highlights the difficulty of enforcing anti-discrimination policies when homophobia goes underground, and when it is only the word of the employee against the word of the employer. It also raises the question of how fair the current grievance process is, when individuals who have to use it to get justice from an institution as vast as the "U" have limited energy and resources to "fight the system."

If the gay, lesbian, bi, and transgender community on campus has made enormous progress in the last thirty years, the suspicion and hostility it continues to face in the 1990s do not warrant optimism. The history of gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual people at the University of Minnesota gains coherence only in the broader perspective of activism and social change which have made gay rights a prominent issue in the 1990s and promise to keep it in public discourse for the foreseeable future. The work and recommendations of the Select Committee have emerged from the activism and experience of at least two generations of gay, lesbian, bi, and transgender students, faculty, and staff who have struggled to carve out a more hospitable space for themselves. Regardless of the outcome of the Select Committee's proposals, they will continue to challenge the University and shape its existence as an intellectual community.